

Remarks/Arguments

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-22 and 25-32 under either 35 U.S.C. 102 or 35 U.S.C. 103 or both in view of Lu et al 6,554,898.

These rejections should be withdrawn and all claims, as amended, should be allowed.

Claims 2, 4, 6, 7, 9, 10, 13, 15, and 17 have been cancelled.

Remaining claims 1, 3, 5, 8, 11, 12, 14, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21, and 24-34 require inductive heating of an electrically conductive tube containing the crucible in both the claimed process and device. This not only permits close temperature control but also overcomes electrical connection, maintenance and service life problems associated with direct connection electrical heaters used in the prior art. Lu et al. discloses or suggests nothing related to such an inductive device or process.

Claim 23 has been rewritten in independent form, as suggested by the Examiner and is thus also allowable, as is new claim 35 depending from claim 32.

Conclusion

Applicant respectfully submits that all pending claims are now in condition for allowance, which action is courteously requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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Dated: July 15, 2005